

Workplace Traffic Safety

This is Road-Safe Workplace, an electronic newsletter about workplace traffic safety from the Vermont Department of Labor because the number one cause of death and injury in the workplace are traffic crashes. Road-Safe Workplace has been created to distribute statistics, facts, and other materials to help employers create, maintain and improve their workplace traffic safety programs. Please use this information in your company newsletters, bulletin boards, or employee e-mail memos. Your thoughts and comments are always welcome. However, if you do not wish to receive Road-Safe Workplace, please reply with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.



Tips For Being Safe in the Traffic Workplace

Every business needs a driver safety program to:

- Save lives and reduce the risk of life-altering injuries within your workforce
- Protect your organization's human and financial resources
- Guard against potential company and personal liabilities associated with crashes involving employees driving on company business

Develop a Workplace Traffic Safety Program

(to keep your driver, and those with whom they share the road, safe)

- Obtain Senior Management Commitment and Employer Involvement
- Create Written Policies and Procedures
- Institute Driver Agreements
- Have Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Checks
- Put a Crash Reporting and Investigation Process in place
- Organize Vehicle Selection (for the job at hand), Maintenance and Inspection process
- Develop a Disciplinary Action system
- Have a Reward/Incentive Program
- Establish a Driver Training/Communication Process
- Understand any Regulatory Compliance

Commentary

"Inattention" has been cited as the number one cause of traffic crashes. Traffic crashes have been cited as the number one cause of death in the workplace. It stands to reason that "inattention" is a killer.

Our attitude determines our behavior. Our behavior determines our adherence to safe driving practices. Our safe driving practices determine how we operate our motor vehicles.

States grapple with curbing risks from drivers using cell phones

States wrestling with unpopular proposals to ban cell phone use while driving are looking at alternatives to curb in-car calls. An Ohio bill would increase criminal penalties when cell-phone use causes a crash. The bill would allow charges of aggravated vehicular assault or aggravated vehicular homicide, both felonies, if prosecutors believe phone use contributed to or caused a crash.

Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia have some kind of law related to cell phones in the car, but only D.C. and three states - New York, Connecticut and New Jersey - have banned the use of hand-held cell phones while driving, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

According to an official with the National Conference of State Legislatures, a dozen states have considered proposals this year or last year that would increase civil or criminal penalties related to cell phones and driving, although it is not known if any of these states have actually enacted the legislation.

Driving Performance While Using Cell Phones: An Observational Study

This study examined the impact of using a hands-free cell phone while driving on speed and safe gap keeping behaviors. The study also examined the association between the measure of disturbance created by using a cell phone and the driver's awareness of the disturbance.

Results indicated that the gaps between the drivers' cars and those in front of them diminished when drivers were engaged in the cell phone conversations. Repeated measures revealed that drivers that had short conversations did not change their speed, while drivers who were engaged in long (over 16 minutes) conversations drove faster.

No effect of drivers' awareness toward cell phone-related disturbance on actual driving behavior monitored in the present study was found.

Sioux Falls, SD Has America's Best Drivers

According to the 2nd annual "Allstate America's Best Drivers Report" Sioux Falls, SD is the U.S. city with the safest drivers. This ranking of the best drivers in the 200 largest cities in America revealed that the average driver in Sioux Falls will experience an auto collision every 14.3 years, compared to the national likelihood of a crash every 10 years – making them 30 percent less likely to have an accident than the national average. Allstate researchers analyzed company claim data to determine the likelihood drivers in America's 200 largest cities would experience a vehicle collision compared to the national average.

Road Rage Survey Reveals Best and Worst Cities

The first annual In The Driver's Seat Road Rage Survey, commissioned by national auto club AutoVantage, found that the least courteous city in the country is Miami, followed by Phoenix, and New York. The other two cities in the bottom five were Los Angeles and Boston. The most courteous city is Minneapolis, followed closely by Nashville, St. Louis, Seattle, and Atlanta. Behaviors by other drivers that cause stress for commuters, and which can lead to road rage, include: driving too fast, tailgating, and cutting over without notice.

Restrictions and Parent Actions Reduce Teen Crashes

It happens all the time – mention teen driving and parents of teens shudder, roll their eyes and wonder aloud just how their sons and daughters will survive. It is a natural reaction, but one that should be reversed. Parental leadership is not only needed, it is required. One of the workplace traffic distractions faced by parents of teens the reality of teen crashes and all that that implies. Teen driving is a very serious problem in Vermont and across the country. And, tired teens add a whole other dimension to workplace traffic safety.

While summer months offer young people the welcome opportunity to veer from strict schedules and to relax after a busy school year, summertime may also cause new drivers (those 16 and 17 years old) to take risks behind the wheel. A new study released by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety indicates that July and August are the deadliest months for teen driving, but it also found that preventative measures can be taken to reduce their risk.

The study showed that teens who obey traffic regulations, follow the graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws of their state, and have parents that are actively involved in their children's driving decisions are 20% less likely to get into a crash. The Foundation's statistics from 1995-2004 indicate that on average 104 teens aged 16 and 17 have died in drowsy driving crashes in July and August alone.

The study's findings corroborate those of NSF's 2006 *Sleep in America* poll of 11-17 year-olds, which indicated that education *can* help to change behaviors. NSF's poll found that the average sleep time for those who said some sleep information was taught in driver's education is 7.1 hours, while the average for those not taught about sleep was 6.9 hours. Yet NSF's poll also indicated that drowsy driving is still a frequent occurrence when it comes to teens – a startling 51% of the 16- and 17-year-olds surveyed reported they had driven drowsy at least once in the past year.

GDL is an excellent countermeasure for drowsy driving and related crash factors, but comprehensive GDL laws do not exist in every state and further education is needed for all teen drivers to understand the dangers of drowsy driving.

Employers need to be cognizant of the stress faced by their workers who are parents of teen drivers.

New Campaign For Teen Drivers To Improve Safety in Work Zones

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers, killing more than 6,000 every year. These additional risks also are present in highway work zones, where a teenage driver is killed every 3 days, and seven teenagers are injured each day. Over the next several years, highway construction is expected to increase by 33 to 65 percent, and the number of roadway work sites will increase proportionally. To improve the safety of new teen drivers in work zones, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) have developed a multifaceted campaign called "Turning Point: Roadway Work Zone Safety for New Drivers, to be used primarily in the driver education process. It is intended to help them understand the hazards they may encounter while driving through work zones and learn how they can travel through work zones more safely. For further information, contact Jim Childers at ARTBA, 202-289-4434 or jchilders@artba.org.

Employer Guidebook to Reduce Traffic Crashes

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) have joined forces to create ***Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes***. This publication features a 10-step program to help employers improve traffic safety performance and minimize the risk of motor vehicle crashes. The document includes success stories from employers who have benefited from effective driver safety programs, including Pike Industries with operations in Vermont.

The booklet is available to employers from: njames@labor.state.vt.us. Ask for the ***Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes***. The booklet will be sent in the mail, so be sure to include your mailing address. Or, employers may download the guide from http://www.osha.gov/publications/motor_vehicle_guide.pdf.

Inattention, speed, driving while impaired, disregard for stop signs and traffic lights, and failure to yield the right of way are the major causes of crashes on our highways.



**REMEMBER -- BUCKLE YOUR SEATBELT
EVERY TIME!**